

## Influenza (Flu)

Seasonal Influenza (Flu) > Flu Season



Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

About Flu

+

Who is at High Risk for Flu + Complications

+

Flu Season

—

What You Need to Know for 2020-21

Health Care Providers

Past Flu Seasons

+

Prevent Flu

+

Flu Vaccines Work

+

Symptoms & Diagnosis

+

Treatment

+

Schools, Businesses & Travelers

+

Flu Activity & Surveillance

+

Health Professionals

+

Flu News & Spotlights

+

What's New

What CDC Does

[FluVaxView](#)

[Communications Resource Center](#)

[International Work](#)

[Outbreak Investigations](#)

Get Email Updates

To receive weekly email updates about Seasonal Flu, enter your email address:

Email Address

Submit

What's this?



Influenza Types

[Seasonal](#)

[Pandemic](#)

[Avian](#)

[Swine](#)

[Influenza in Animals](#)

# Frequently Asked Influenza (Flu) Questions: 2020–2021 Season

## Flu Vaccine

### What viruses will the 2020-2021 flu vaccines protect against?

There are many different flu viruses and they are constantly changing. The composition of U.S. flu vaccines is reviewed annually and updated as needed to match circulating flu viruses. Flu vaccines protect against the three or four viruses (depending on the vaccine) that research suggests will be most common.

For 2020-2021, trivalent (three-component) egg-based vaccines are recommended to contain:

- A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (updated)
- A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus (updated)
- B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus (updated)

Quadrivalent (four-component) egg-based vaccines, which protect against a second lineage of B viruses, are recommended to contain:

- the three recommended viruses above, plus B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus.

For 2020-2021, cell- or recombinant-based vaccines are recommended to contain:

- A/Hawaii/70/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (updated)
- A/Hong Kong/45/2019 (H3N2)-like virus (updated)
- B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus (updated)
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus

### Are there any changes to the 2020-2021 Northern Hemisphere vaccines from what was included in this season's 2019-2020 U.S. flu vaccines?

Yes, this season's flu vaccines were updated to better match viruses expected to be circulating in the United States.

- The egg-based H1N1 vaccine component was updated from an A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus to an A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus.
- The cell- or recombinant-based H1N1 vaccine component was updated from an A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus to an A/Hawaii/70/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus.
- The egg-based H3N2 vaccine component was updated from an A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2)-like virus to an A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus.
- The cell- or recombinant-based H3N2 vaccine component was updated from an A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2)-like virus to an A/Hong Kong/45/2019 (H3N2)-like virus.
- The B/Victoria lineage vaccine component was updated from a B/Colorado/06/2017 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus to a B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus.
- The B/Yamagata lineage vaccine component was not updated.

### Are there any new vaccines licensed for use during the 2020-2021 flu season?

There are two new vaccines licensed for use during the 2020-2021 flu season.

- The first is a quadrivalent high-dose vaccine licensed for use in adults 65 years and older. This vaccine will replace the previously licensed trivalent high-dose vaccine.
- The second new vaccine that will be available is a quadrivalent adjuvanted vaccine licensed for use in adults 65 years and older.
  - This vaccine is similar to the previously licensed trivalent vaccine containing MF59 adjuvant, but it has one additional influenza B component.

### What flu vaccines are recommended this season?

For the 2020-2021 flu season, providers may choose to administer any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine (IIV, RIV4, or LAIV4) with no preference for any one vaccine over another.

Vaccine options this season include:

- [Standard dose flu shots.](#)
- [High-dose shots](#) for people 65 years and older.
- [Shots made with adjuvant](#) for people 65 years and older.
- [Shots made with virus grown in cell culture.](#) No eggs are involved in the production of this vaccine.
- Shots made using a vaccine production technology ([recombinant vaccine](#)) that do not require having a candidate vaccine virus (CVV) sample to produce.
- [Live attenuated influenza vaccine](#) (LAIV). – A vaccine made with attenuated (weakened) live virus that is given by nasal spray.

### Do we need to get a flu vaccine earlier this year (i.e. July/August)?

While the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has not yet voted on the flu vaccine recommendations for 2020-2021, CDC does not anticipate a major change in the recommendation on timing of vaccination. Getting vaccinated in July or August is too early, especially for older people, because of the likelihood of reduced protection against flu infection later in the flu season. September and October are good times to get vaccinated. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, vaccination should continue, even in January or later.

### Will there be changes in how and where flu vaccine is given this fall and winter?

How and where people get a flu vaccine may need to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CDC is working with healthcare providers and state and local health departments to develop contingency plans on how to vaccinate people against flu without increasing their risk of exposure to respiratory germs, like the virus that causes COVID-19.

Some settings that usually provide flu vaccine, like workplaces, may not offer vaccination this upcoming season, because of the challenges with maintaining social distancing. For more information on where you can get a flu vaccine, visit [www.vaccinefinder.gov](https://www.vaccinefinder.gov).

## Flu and COVID-19

### Will there be flu along with COVID-19 in the fall and winter?

While it's not possible to say with certainty what will happen in the fall and winter, CDC believes it's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading. In this context, getting a flu vaccine will be more important than ever. CDC recommends that all people 6 months and older get a yearly flu vaccine.

### Can I have flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

Yes. It is possible have flu (as well as other respiratory illnesses) and COVID-19 at the same time. Experts are still studying how common this can be.

#### Sources

[Clinical Questions about COVID-19: Questions and Answers: Testing, Diagnosis, and Notification](#)

### Will a flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19

Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, however flu vaccination has many other important [benefits](#). Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization and death. Getting a flu vaccine this fall will be more important than ever, not only to reduce your risk from flu but also to help conserve potentially scarce health care resources.

### Is COVID-19 more dangerous than flu?

Flu and COVID-19 can both result in serious illness, including illness resulting in hospitalization or death. While there is still much to learn about COVID-19, at this time, it does seem as if COVID-19 is more deadly than seasonal influenza; however, it is too early to draw any conclusions from the current data. This may change as we learn more about the number of people who are infected who have mild illnesses.

## Flu Activity

### Will new flu viruses circulate this season?

Flu viruses are constantly changing so it's not unusual for new flu viruses to appear each year. More information about [how flu viruses change](#) is available.

### When will flu activity begin and when will it peak?

The timing of flu is difficult to predict and can vary in different parts of the country and from season to season.

[Top of Page](#)

Page last reviewed: [June 5, 2020](#)

Content source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#)

#### HAVE QUESTIONS?

- Visit CDC-INFO
- Call 800-232-4636
- Email CDC-INFO
- Open 24/7

#### CDC INFORMATION

- About CDC
- Jobs
- Funding
- Policies
- File Viewers & Players

#### Privacy

- FOIA
- No Fear Act
- OIG
- Nondiscrimination
- Accessibility

#### CONNECT WITH CDC

